various social, economic and political developments in the neighboring countries;

(d) whether Government had any prior feed back about development that took place in Nepal on 1st February, 2005; and

(e) if not, the reasons for this failure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (e) Peace, stability and prosperity in our neighbouring countries is an important objective of our national security and foreign policies. Government of India follows a multi-pronged approach of interaction, engagement and cooperation with all our neighbours, including Nepal, at various levels, in diverse areas for mutual benefit. Close monitoring and evaluation of developments and trends in our neighbourhood is an essential element of policy formulation.

India continues to closely follow the developments in Nepal. Government has consistently articulatd the view that the problems being faced in Nepal should be addressed from a standpoint of national consensus. The role of political parties, representing multi-party democracy, in foreign such a consensus is essential.

Agreement between India and Malaysia

346. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreements were signed between India and Malaysia during the recent visit of Malaysian Prime Minister; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERALAFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Three agreements were signed in the presence of the two Prime Ministers, namely, (a) an agreement pursuant to the Joint Venture agreement dated 15th May 2001 between the ANTRIX Corporation and MEASAT International (South Asia) Ltd. for joint marketing of satellite capacity; (b) a Letter of Intent signed by MEASAT for procurement, launch and putting into orbit of MEASAT 4 satellite from the ANTRIX Corporation; and (c) a Concession Agreement for the development, construction, operation and maintenance of the Hyderabad

International Airport between Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India and Hyderabad International Airport Limited.

In addition, 12 commercial agreements were signed in presence of the Prime Minsiter of Malaysia at the India-Malaysia Business Forum jointly organised by Confederation of India Industries (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

Indians in Pakistani Jails

347. SMT. SUKHBUNS KAUR :
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Indians, including those Armed Forces personnel declared missing during Indo-Pak wars of 1965, 1971 and the Kargil War, are still in Pakistani Jails;

(b) if so, the number of such Indians and the Army Personnel in Pak Jails as on January 1, 2005; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken to confirm their identity and to get them released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) As of January 1, 2005, according to available information, around 900 Indian civilian prisoners, over 650 fishermen and 54 Prisoners of War (POWs) are believed to be in custody in Pakistan. Pakistan Government has been consistently denying existence of any Indian POWs in Pakistan.

(c) During the Foreign Secretary Level Talks between the two countries on June, 27-28, 2004 in New Delhi, India proposed to work for the reciprocal release of all prisoners who have been granted Consular Access, whose nationality has been confirmed and who have completed their sentences. The two sides agreed to initiate steps for early release of civilian prisoners.

The issue of release of Indian prisoners was again taken up during the Foreign Secretary level talks between India & Pakistan held in New Delhi on September 4, 2004 as well as during higher level discussions, such as during the visit to India by the Prime Minister of Pakistan on November 23-24, 2004. The issue of release of all Indian fishermen along with their